before the Reforms Committee, and primarily to that of Mrs. Besant, the Labour party in England have not only been interested in the aims and aspirations of educated India, but have promised their cordial help in securing their practical realization. Even the self-governing dominions have come to look to India from another angle of vision and to entertain for it a new born respect. In a recent speech General Smuts as Premier of the South African Dominions stated in reply to an address presented by the Indians of Durban :—"Owing to her magnificent effort India has won for herself a place among the nations of the world.....There was a great feeling in England in favour of India's aspirations.....We are members of one family and belong to the same Empire.' And have we not had practical evidence of the good will of English statesmen in that they have formulated a scheme to start us on the road to self-government, wherein is to be found an element of responsibility as contrasted with the Congress League Scheme which was entirely destitute of it ?

On the other hand, the position taken up by the *Times* and by those who entertain similar opinions is neither intelligible nor logical. They are willing to support the principle of dualism in the Provincial Governments but not as regards the Central Government. Apart from the merits of dualism there is an important matter in issue, and that is whether the terms of the Announcement have been fully carried out when the Government of India is not only kept free from popular control, but the Bill now before Parliament is characterised by the absence of any indication as to when and how this is likely to be achieved. It is admitted that the pledge of the 20th August, 1917, should be fulfilled and that without delay, but its

wording had given grounds for the belief that some kind of popular control would be allowed in the Government of India, perhaps under conditions that would be more strenuous as regards 'successive stages' and 'progressive responsibility' than those imposed in respect of provincial Governments. The withholding of a privilege as regards the grant of which there is a complete unanimity of opinion is undoubtedly causing considerable disappointment and dissatisfaction. It will leave the sore open and lead to continued agitation, which it was hoped would now cease so that the energies of the Government and of the people could be concentrated in the carrying out of constructive work of reform.

The Indian National Congress at its session in Amritsar has given an adverse verdict in respect to the proposed reforms, stigmatizing them as "inadequate," "unsatisfactory" and "disappointing." On the other hand the Conference of the Moderates "welcomes the Government of India Act of 1919 as a definite and substantial step towards the progressive realisation of responsible government." We shall see further on which of these views represents the considered opinion of the Indian *intelligentia* and of the masses. It is sufficient to note here that even Mrs. Besant, who at first was for the rejection of the Reforms Scheme is of opinion that "autocracy has been crippled in the Central Government."

CHAPTER V.

INDIA'S CAPACITY FOR SELF-GOVERNMENT.

The evidence now being recorded by the Parliamentary Committee on Indian reforms has brought out in strong relief certain views that are diametrically opposed to each other, the one insisting that India is prepared to undertake the entire task of self-government, the other entertaining grave doubts that it will ever be fit for this purpose, or at all events, not in the near future. It is obvious we are here dealing with extremists on either side, against whose honesty no reproaches need be levelled, but who have allowed prejudice to obscure their judgment. When Mr. Patel stigmatizes the Montague-Chelmsford report as 'that little thing' or Mr. Madhava Rao is desirous to dispense at once with the whole body of English members of the civil service or the Muslim League and Congress deputations plead for full provincial autonomy—they have allowed their resentment against the bureaucracy to obsess their minds to such an extent that their primary consideration is some how to be rid of the offensive agents of British rule in India. Lord Sydenham, Sir Henry Stephen, Sir Verney Lovett and others of that clan are so steeped in autocracy that they cannot brook the idea of people who have been bred in dependence being even partially freed from control and permitted to poach in their cherished preserves; and they, therefore, allow themselves to be swayed by considerations which would hardly appeal to those free from bias. It is, therefore, pertinent

to enter into a somewhat minute examination of the true condition of India to take up the burden of self-government.

There are certain matters in respect to which, happily, there is a consensus of opinion, for even the bureaucracy are compelled to accord their assent thereto. In a previous article a reference has been made to Sir James Meston's views as regards the newly awakened spirit of nationality in India. Sir Thomas Holderness supported this when he emphasized 'the increase of political activity among the educated people in India. The population of India was awakening to a sense of national consciousness and was no longer content to render passive and unquestioning obedience to the rulers.' In the Report of the Moral and Material Progress of India, which has just been officially issued, it is stated that 'the time has gone by when the topic of constitutional reform in India could be summarily dismissed with the remark that those who demand it form but a fraction of the population.' But, of course, from this no inference can necessarily be drawn that the people are fit for constitutional government, for an advance in political consciousness does not necessarily imply a growth in administrative ability, nor is education any guarantee for it. And this is the line that is readily adopted by the opponents of reform. These may be classed as negative objections, but there are certain positive reasons advanced to show the unfitness of Indians for self-government.

It is stated that any devolution of power on the part of the Government would mean its passing into the hands of an oligarchy, either on the basis of religion or of education. The Brahman question has suddenly come to the front and has loomed very largely before the Joint Committee. It is a large question and merits special treatment. But a

reference to one or two points in connection with it will be enough to establish the artificial nature of the agitation in respect to it. It is only in the Madras presidency that a controversy has been started by and on behalf of non-Brahmans, and no other part of India is interested in it. The fact that it dates only since the publication of the Reforms Report indicates that it is the failure to secure communal representation that is the real grievance and not any recent aggressive conduct on the part of the Brahmans. But the bogey of a priestly oligarchy is knocked on the head by a somewhat significant incident to which Mr. Montagu drew the attention of Sir Alexander Cardew, who seemed somewhat hot on the subject, that the non-Brahmans had in the last council election in Madras, secured a larger number of seats than the Brahmans. These, in South India, no doubt, occupy a dominant position, partly by reason of their priestly functions, but mainly because they hold the monopoly of education. Their influence is a good deal exaggerated, as for instance, when Sir Henry Stephen stated that a judgment pronounced by a Brahman judge carried greater weight. The litigant is more interested in the result of a case than in the personality of the judge. The contemptuous treatment accorded to the Pandahs in some of India's shrines is evidence that the Brahman power is on the wane. This is typical of what is going on around us. Education is exercising a levelling influence and whatever else happens there need be no apprehension that in these matter-of-fact days there is any prospect of India being dominated by a priestly oligarchy.

But we are on firmer ground when we come to the educated classes. Strenuous objections have been raised

to the transfer to them of any power by the Government on the ground that it will be monopolized by a comparatively small section of the Indian population, who come under the category of being politically-minded. Assuming the correctness of this proposition the first point to be considered is whether the rest of the population object to their kith and kin, who happen to be educated, to have entrusted to them certain legislative and administrative functions or do they prefer the autocratic rule of a foreign nation ? The Reforms Report gives, as the main reason for withholding popular control in the Central Government, the uncertainty whether educated India is in sympathy with and capable of fairly representing those who do not come within this category. It is a well known fact that if, in a middle class family in India, there are a dozen individuals who can be reckoned amongst the *intelligentia* there are just as many who are outside this group, for through indifference or poverty or some other untoward circumstances, they evince no interest in politics or cherish any great desire for a vote. Their more favoured brethren do not discard them for this reason. Or, if a poor man is a keen politician it is far from correct to presume that he will do anything to the detriment of his richer relatives. And if we go further down to the masses, the apprehensions expressed on their behalf are equally groundless. Recent events should surely knock out of the head any idea that the bureaucracy are more in touch with the masses who look to them to be the interpreters of their wants in preference to the educated classes. In fact some of the reactionary witnesses before the Joint Committee have expressed their misgivings about the result of the *intelligentia* being entrusted with responsible government inasmuch as

these would, by reason of their close association with the masses, promote ill-will amongst them towards the Government. A glance at the resolutions passed at the Congress meetings will afford convincing evidence that the welfare of the masses has not been overlooked. Some of the demands made were for the benefit of all communities while those which were calculated to promote the interests of the masses were larger in number than such as would solely benefit the classes. If any further proof were wanted of the good will of the educated Indian towards the masses it is to be found in the Reforms Report where its authors credit him with having 'by speeches and in the press done much to spread the idea of a united and self-respecting India among thousands who had no such conception in their minds. Helped by the inability of other classes in India to play a prominent part he has assumed the place of leader.' And when we find Indian witnesses advocating the extension of the franchise, while one or more have pleaded for universal suffrage, the contention that there is an absence of sympathy with the masses rests on a very slender basis.

But, it is argued, the number of the *intelligentia*, who have raised an outcry for political rights, is so small, about 5 per cent. of the population, while the rest of the people are 'voiceless' or 'inarticulate,' that the time has not arrived for saddling India with constitutional government. Recent events have given somewhat painful evidence of the fact that the masses, though not strictly entitled to be called political-minded, are yet, under the guidance and direction of the educated classes, exhibiting a keen interest in public affairs and especially in matters involving their personal welfare. And the probability is

that as time goes on there will be an appreciable growth in the number of the people who are so disposed. But even if it is true that there will be a transfer of power to the hands of an educated oligarchy, is there anything so extraordinary or objectionable in it as to arouse the protests that have been raised? Without entering into the merits of the question whether the Southborough Committee might not, with safety, have extended the franchise, there is no reason for India to be reproached for its incapacity to raise an electorate that is even 10 per cent. of the population. By comparing this with some foreign countries we find that three years after the Reform Act of 1832 the electorate of England was 4.6 per cent., of Ireland 1.9 per cent., of Scotland 3.2 per cent., and so late as, 1888 for the whole of the United Kingdom it had risen to only 8.9 per cent. Sweden started with an electorate of 1 per cent., and Italy with 2½ per cent. And the United States of America, the most democratic of countries, had so late as 1888 an electorate of only 17.5 per cent. of the total population.

There is another objection raised by Anglo-Indian officials, and especially by those who have retired, which has also obtained recognition in the Reforms Report. It states that 'there runs through Indian society a series of cleavages—of religion, race and caste—which constantly threaten its solidarity and of which any wise political scheme must take serious heed.' That the people are split up into numerous divisions it would be idle to deny, but is it really a fact that their political interests are as irreconcilable as they are stated to be? And is the government entirely free from the charge of having, in one notable instance at least, encouraged these differences or at

all events made capital out of them? The Mahomedans kept aloof from political agitation when the Hindus first embarked on it. They were commended and patted, and favours were showered on them. The head of a local Government unblushingly compared the position of Mahomedans to that of a favourite wife. Well, the Mahomedans, in course of time, have developed a most uncompromising hostility to the manner in which the administration of India is being carried on, and foremost in the ranks of home-rulers are stalwarts like Jinnah, Mazarul Haq and Hasan Imam. And any unprejudiced person can see for himself that in the political movements of to-day Mahomedans are just as forward as the Hindus. The Congress-League Scheme was the joint product of both the communities. The occurrences at Arrah and Katarpur were due to the religious bigotry of the ignorant masses or the narrow-mindedness of some better informed persons, and have been equally denounced by both communities. That a real change has taken place in their feelings is evident from the fact that Hindus and Mahomedans are now welcomed in each other's places of worship and are being encouraged to deliver political harangues from their pulpits and platforms. As to the fraternization which a few days ago characterized the celebration of the Moharrum and the Dussehra and the Khilafat Day, it has simply staggered people of the old school and is an object lesson to the Government, which it would be an act of supreme wisdom on its part to take to heart. In Canada and South Africa, where social animosities were most pronounced, the grant of full responsible government has been justified by the result, but for India, only partial responsibility is being demanded and a hundred and one

objections have been raised. At the same time, we would do well not to exaggerate the significance of the indications around us of a newly-formed amity and unity. The very fact that communal representation is being demanded by various communities is enough, in itself, to raise doubts as to the extent and reality of these sentiments, which may be disturbed by a trifling difference on some religious or social matter. But in their attitude towards political questions there is evident a genuine disposition to be guided by the principle laid down by Dadabhai Naoroji—'Whether I am a Hindu, a Mahomedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India, our nationality is Indian.'

From the foregoing remarks an inference will perhaps be drawn that it is intended to establish the fact that we are now fully prepared to undertake the task of self-government. It will be a great day for India when this could be truthfully said about it, but it is doubtful if, so far, we have arrived at that stage. We have yet to prove that we are equal to bear the responsibilities that will be placed on us. But this we can only do if the opportunity is afforded to us and not if it is withheld, as it is being done in the case of the Central Government. While we are entitled to enter a protest against this over-strained caution on the part of Government, we are by no means so sure of our position when we proceed to claim provincial autonomy without going through the stages that have been imposed on us. The desire to dispense with these stages does credit to our patriotism; and that we have a sufficiently large number of men of education and ability to undertake any task, however difficult, will not be denied; but what we lack is administrative

experience and very often a due sense of responsibility in the discharge of a duty. Though British rule has been autocratic the idea that India may some day be fit for self-government has not been absent in the minds of some of its rulers, possessed of sympathy and good will towards the people of this country. One of these was Lord Ripon, who looked to local self-government to pave the way for self-government. With this in view municipalities and local boards were started by him. That they have not been an unqualified success it would be idle to deny, and in the Reforms Report it is frankly admitted that this is due, to some extent, to the action of Government officials who have kept these institutions under their leading strings and have thus prevented their natural development. Within the few months that Government interference and control have been relaxed, a most desirable change is to be noticed, and it may confidently be stated that the people will justify the responsibility that has been placed on them. But can it be said that in the past we have acquitted ourselves so as to be able to repudiate the charge of incapacity? Go where we will, the same sad story is presented to us of members who have subordinated the public good to selfish ends and have abused the position they had acquired, of others who have allowed sectarian feelings to influence their conduct or have wasted valuable time in wrangling over petty matters or by indulging in long-winded speeches or allowed themselves to become the tools for registering the mandates of officials. Is it any exaggeration to say that self-respecting people keep away from these institutions, so as to avoid coming into contact with objectionable officials and still more objectionable non-officials? So far then as administrative

experience is concerned it cannot be said that India is any the richer by what has been acquired during the several decades that municipalities and district boards have been in existence.

When we survey the higher domain of the legislative councils the same disappointment stares us in the face at the amount of experience that has been acquired or the work that has been achieved. It is true there was not much to be done there except to act the part of a critic, but even this, besides its being a thankless task, was barren of any good results for the reason given in the Reforms Report that 'the presence of the official *bloc* may, to some extent, give an air of unreality to criticism in the council hall'. There are several types of members to be found in the councils. There are those devoid of brains and of self-respect, who are there as creatures of the Government, but be it said in their favour that they are more or less harmless, for no one takes them seriously and any material benefit they derive from the part they are expected to play is counter-balanced by the loss they sustain in falling in the estimation of their own countrymen. It is doubtful who is more to be commiserated—such men or the Government, which utilizes such men. Anyhow their days are numbered, for in the new order of things they will not be tolerated in any public assembly. We next come to another type of men, proud, over-sensitive and with lofty ideals before them, who again, to quote the words of the Reforms Report, 'belittle the utility of the councils, if not denounce them as a cynical and calculated sham'. With the courage of their convictions they shake the dust of the councils off their feet. But the country has need of such men, and we will see them

before long fighting in a more dignified council the cause they have so much at heart. Yet another type which is represented by men who are veterans in the field or are giving the best days of their youth and who are described as possessing "a sense of responsibility in dealing with Government legislation—and a skilful and, on the whole, a moderate use of the opportunities we have given them in the legislative councils of influencing Government and affecting the course of public business.' This is a generous tribute, but it will hardly be endorsed by the bureaucracy in India considering the hostile attitude they usually adopt towards non-official members, and are ready not only to browbeat them, but to treat them with a discourtesy of which some fine samples have been given at the recent meeting of the Imperial Legislative Council. There is yet another type which is described in the Report as thinking 'more of display'. Those who come under this category do not fully realize the responsibility of their position is due to the sense of unreality which characterizes the proceedings of the councils. Giving such men every credit for their good intentions, they sometimes discredit the cause they are fighting for. Conscious of the fact that what is said by them is treated with indifference by the Government, and will, in no way, affect the issue of the matter under discussion, they indulge in prolixity in debate and an oratorical display with the main idea of appealing to the gallery. They loom large in the eyes of the public, by whom they are looked upon as heroes. It cannot be said they have added to their own legislative or administrative experience or of that of the country, which unfortunately, has a weakness for heroes. On the one hand we are pleading for self-

government, on the other hand we allow ourselves to be dominated by heroes,—than whom it would be impossible to find a set of men more unpractical. They may be conscientious, they may be spiritually-minded, but as leaders in the path of self-government, they are most dangerous, and may lead us into pitfalls which more practical men would have the foresight to avoid. If India wishes to convince the world that it is qualified for self-government, it must eliminate hero-worship and be guided by men whose conduct is characterized by sobriety and moderation and practical common sense.

Self-government is a high ideal, but it is not difficult of attainment if only we will take to heart the words of that great man, A. O. Hume, to whom India is under eternal obligation and who exhorted us: 'Never grow faint or weary in the up-hill fight; stick to constitutional methods; be united; brother-soldiers in one holy army, put far off from you alike all selfish aims, all personal differences; be vigilant, wise and temperate alike in worth and in desert; be sure that a power greater than all, King's or Viceroy's or Parliament's, will lead you in the fulness of time, to all that you can rightly and wisely desire and to all that you have tutored yourselves to merit. Let all strive unselfishly to pave the way for India's enfranchisement, and the happiness and growth, physical, mental and moral of her teeming millions.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE BUREAUCRACY.

In the Announcement of August 20, 1917, His Majesty's Government proposed conferring self-governing institutions on India *as an integral part of the British Government.* In the memorandum submitted in 1916 by nineteen elected members of the Imperial Legislative Council the demand made was for self-government *under the aegis of the British Crown.* In the Congress-League Scheme, wherein is formulated in full the demand of educated India, we find self-government asked for so that India *shall be lifted from the position of a dependency* to that of an equal partner in the Empire with the self-governing dominions. In the controversy which has raged over the Reforms Report and in the evidence given by the Indian witnesses before the Parliamentary Committee though self-government is the goal which is kept in view it is always subject to the understanding that India is to *remain an integral part of the British Empire.* So far then it is clear that no section of Indian politicians contemplates the severance of India from England but that this country should be placed on a level with self-governing dominions.

These, it may be taken as an admitted fact, have no desire to cut themselves away from the mother-country. 'Blood,' it is said 'is thicker than water,' and the truth of this aphorism may be fully conceded. But in this materialistic age there are other and more practical considerations

which cannot be ignored. The colonies take a pride, and very rightly, in being members of the British Empire, and in the later day developments the probability is that they will be allowed a substantial share in the direction of Imperial policy, with the result of drawing together the bonds which unite the dominions with the mother-country. But apart from this the colonies are not strong enough at present to stand on their legs and face the world with a determination to fight for their existence, unaided by the moral and material support of England. And so it will be with India. When, in the fullness of time, she has secured full responsible government she will not be in a better position, and perhaps in not so good a position, to defend herself from foreign aggression without the aid of some power with sufficient resources which can be effectively utilized for their protection. So that, if for no higher motives, selfish considerations would induce India to sacredly maintain its connection with the British Empire. Sufficient evidence has, of late, been given of her loyalty to a country of which she is at present a dependancy, but in respect to which she has the ambition to occupy a much higher and a more trusted position.

India, then, has no desire to be independent, though such of its people who may be reckoned to be politically-minded are in a ferment to bring about a change in the present relations with the nation by which they are governed at present. English statesmen have evinced a sympathetic attitude towards her longings and aspirations and are satisfied that the conferring of responsible government on its teeming millions will be conducive to their best interests and will, in no way, subvert the supremacy of the paramount power. But the governing caste in

India, for a caste it has become with time-honoured traditions to back it, seems to think otherwise. It is filled with vague apprehensions as to the future, both of India and of the British Empire. Sir Verney Lovett, as their representative, stated before the Joint Committee on the Government of India Bill with reference to the vigorous propaganda pursued by 'anti-Government extremists' that 'a strong lead was needed against this, which the British Parliament should give in order to prevent the ruin of India and of British interests'. Now, there is a confusion of ideas here which ought to be cleared up. That there are extremists in Indian politics will have to be admitted, just as there are extremists amongst the governing class in India amongst whom Sir Verney Lovett is a shining light. Sir William Meyer, on being asked whether the grant of self-government to India would lead to its insistence on separation, stated that in the present state of world politics, most Indians realized that they could not stand alone. And Lord Carmichael, who had been Governor both in Madras and in Bengal, gave as his opinion that his experience as such did not make him think that responsible government would be impossible or harmful in India. British India, as an integral part of the Empire, would, he believed, benefit by its realization. In the face of such opinions Sir Verney Lovett has well qualified himself to be called a bureaucratic extremist. But when he stigmatizes the Indian extremists as 'anti-Government' he overshoots the mark. They are not hostile to the Government, but they exhibit a decided animus against the English members of the civil service. Some there are who would like to clear out this class root and branch at a moment's notice. But Sir Verney Lovett will

say 'we are the Government, and a hostile attitude towards us is tantamount to hostility towards Government'. That the agents of British rule in India do, at present, constitute the Government is no doubt true, but it does not necessarily follow that the display of animus towards them is to be reckoned as a high crime and misdemeanour, though certain complacent judicial authorities seem to entertain this view. To be logical, Mr. Montagu ought to be arraigned as the chief offender, for he makes no secret of the fact that it is his heart's desire to cripple and disable this class by transferring the governing power from their hands to the hands of the people and his latest pronouncement is to the effect that 'it is preposterous to suggest that the appointed destiny of the country should be delayed or altered in the interests of the service'.

But the service is not disposed to take lying down what it believes is a blow for its gradual extinction or, worse than that, their degradation from the position of masters to that of servants. The authors of the Reforms Scheme have in the most fulsome terms, acknowledged the debt India owes to the members of the civil service, who are told that heretofore they shaped and helped to shape the policy on which the administration was to be run and they have a fine administrative record, but that, in future, they will have to share their responsibilities with the people whom they will have to train in years to come for relieving them entirely of their burden. An appeal was made to their loyalty and it was fondly believed that it would elicit a satisfactory response. But no sooner the Secretary of State's back was turned on India than the 'white mutiny' declared itself and repudiated the assertion that the service had been consulted in respect to the

proposed reforms or had in any form given these their approval. They protested against the diminution of the prospects of promotion, against what they considered was a degradation of their position in that, in the new order of things, they would have to carry out a policy in the framing of which they had no effective voice. They chafed under the idea that they will have to carry out the behests of a minister which they may disapprove as not consonant with the interests of good government. Sir Michael O'Dwyer has stated that members of the civil service are unwilling to serve under Indian ministers. As to training men who are to relieve them of their burdens, which is the new role allotted to them, they are curious as to the identity of those they will have to educate. Surely not the ministers who are to be practically their masters. And when the various services come to be largely recruited from amongst the Indians, they are filled with apprehension about the fate of a solitary Englishman in a mofussil station nursing his woes without another white man to console him in his misfortunes. Finally, the decision is arrived at that India is no longer a fit country to live in for an Englishman possessing any self-respect and therefore 'such of us as are not prepared to make themselves pawns in what is termed in the Report "one of the greatest political experiments ever undertaken in the world's history" should be given the option of retiring on pensions calculated with reference to their service and to their prospects'.

It would be unfair to the civil service to say that their grievances are absolutely groundless, though to what extent its members deserve to be commisserated or compensated is another matter. The 'white mutiny', be it

said, is confined to the civil service only and, it would appear, to only a certain section of it, which would be glad to anticipate the period of their retirement by a few years at the expense of the Indian tax-payer. The younger members have not had time to get affected by any sentiment and may be expected to approach the question from the practical point of view whether their interests are likely to be prejudiced, to which they have every right to take exception. Englishmen in other services and departments do not seem to be disturbed or alarmed at the constitutional changes now being forged, for they realize the fact that so long as they efficiently and conscientiously discharge their duties and are remunerated accordingly, they are fulfilling the destiny which brought them to India. It cannot be said that their sympathy towards the misfortunes of the civil service is of a very gushing nature, for they have often had to smart under the overbearing and offensive behaviour of its members. Lord Carmichael, while deploring the hostile attitude so often taken up by Indians towards the civil service, had to admit that he 'had heard as harsh criticism of the Indian civil service from Europeans belonging to other services'. And the reason is obvious. By a peculiar combination of circumstances all power is centred in the hands of the civil service. The district officer who may happen to be a junior of six or seven years standing controls all the other departments. He may within half an hour pass orders directing the superintendent of police, the civil surgeon, the forest officer or the engineer to do this, that or the other or may criticize one thing or another done by them without possessing any technical knowledge or experience which makes him competent to

do so. Naturally the service which has to produce men to perform such super-human functions suffers from a swelled head and is considered somewhat of a nuisance by other European officials, who will not be averse to being freed from a thraldom, which, at least at times, must be humiliating.

When we come to look upon the relations of the civil service to the educated classes the fat is fully in the fire. Each favours the other with unmitigated scorn and matters have come to such a pass that some change was bound to take place to prevent an explosion. Time was when those put to rule over the land were not only looked upon but were, as a matter of fact, the protectors and benefactors of the people. They lived amongst them, they moved with them, they studied their wants which they relieved to the best of their ability. England was a far off land and stray hill stations which then existed were the resort of the privileged few, for dak gharries and bullock carts were not sufficiently inviting to be utilized for a few days pleasure. Each bungalow had a walled enclosure attached to it wherein were located the dusky beauties who filled the position of wives or mistresses to men who had to lead a more or less solitary life in India. Where such fraternisation existed there was no room for racial feeling. But times have changed. Privilege leave for three months enables a visit to be paid to the home-land. A twenty-four hours run and often less is all that is necessary to transport the tired and jaded worker to the cool heights and fresh breezes of the attractive summer resorts now scattered all over India. An increase in the number of Europeans, official and non-official, has brought into existence clubs in every little station in India. Not only

are illicit connections tabooed but a curious development of morality is the ostracism of a European, whether male or female, who has formed a legitimate alliance with an Indian. All round we see influences at work to widen the breach between Englishmen and Indians.

If ever a man deserves to be commisserated it is the district officer of to-day, for he is the victim of a system of administration which evidently looks upon him as a monster, for to no human being is given the capacity, physical and mental, to cope with the multifarious duties with which he is burdened. He is supposed to have his finger in every man's pie, thus causing needless irritation without any appreciable gain to the public. He has to detect the criminal, order his prosecution and then sit in judgment on him, for a beneficent legislation has ordained it so. And when an aggressive and pertinacious limb of the law begins to quote rulings by the yard, his wits go woolgathering and he dare not resort to the only possible relief, that of flinging the volumes that had been handed to him at the head of the officious counsel, and has to content himself by making sarcastic and semi-idiotic remarks about the judicial luminaries whose rulings have been quoted. But he consoles himself by nourishing an eternal hatred against lawyers in general, which is returned with compound interest by this class. There is, however, a greater torment he has to endure and that is his commissioner. The district officers would like to see him at the bottom of the sea, for they are worried out of their live by reminders sent by the superintendent of this official, who usually possesses a devilish ingenuity for justifying the existence of his master, which is judged by the number of letters despatched daily, by putting the most outrageous

questions on the simplest matters and by sending directions and recording critiques the inanity of which even the commissioner would realize if there was anything more serious to occupy his mind. But a yet greater infliction is kept in reserve for him, for time-honoured traditions and the most sacred injunctions of Government enjoin on him the duty of giving interviews to the toadies and sycophants who are usually to be found standing outside his gates or to the *raises* and gentry of sorts who trade on their position and on the good nature of the official by asking for favours for themselves or for their relations up to the tenth generation. Harrassed in mind and body, if the official were to lay violent hands on some of them he would certainly be entitled to the benefit of the provisions in the Penal Code relating to justifiable homicide. Here again he has to content himself with entertaining and exhibiting the utmost contempt for his interviewers in particular, and for Indians generally, for producing such wretched specimens of humanity. So much for one of the official methods of promoting good will between the rulers and the ruled. It need hardly be said that the self-respecting Indian, by whose advice the official would really be benefited, never darkens his doors.

It is, therefore, clear that whatever might have been the merits of the district officer in the past, for it was he who built up the 'fine administrative record', he has outlived the period of usefulness that was allotted to him. He is no longer the protector and benefactor of the masses, for he has lost touch with them. They are turning now to the educated classes for help and guidance. With the *intelligentsia*, who are the direct outcome of British rule in India, and with their aims and aspirations he has no

sympathy and as such has to adopt an attitude of aloofness if not of hostility. He has lost the confidence of the people over whom he has been set to rule. With his energies frittered in a hundred and one directions he has neither the capacity nor the time to be an efficient administrator. As the representative of autocracy, which whether by choice or the exigencies of the service he has to protect at all hazards, his armoury is replete with methods which, in these progressive days, are not only repulsive but ineffective to secure the end in view. Repression, coercion, racial contempt and absolute rule may procure temporary relief but in the long run engender a resentment towards those whose instinct of self-preservation compels a resort to such measures as a forlorn hope. Bureaucracy has been weighed in the balance and is found wanting. Sir Claude Hill admitted as much when he stated in the memorandum submitted to the Joint Committee on reforms that 'it cannot be too strongly insisted upon that the bureaucracy and executive, with the best intentions, are liable to make mistakes and to misjudge the effects of measures.' The existing animus against this class is personal, to a certain extent, due to the extreme offensiveness of some of its representatives, but is, in a larger measure, directed against the system which produces such men. There is a strong feeling amongst the educated classes, and English statesmen are more or less sympathize with it, that there is no prospect of any liberal institutions being introduced in India unless the civil service is deprived of its power, prestige and privileges. And this is precisely what is aimed at by the authors of the Reform Report when they propose to take away from the service the decision of the

larger questions of policy and to reduce the status of its members to that of the civil servants in England. This is bound to be the logical result of the memorable Announcement of August 1917 in which important constitutional changes are outlined, and against this fiat there is no appeal, for it has been stated, "our policy is irrevocably declared and it ought to content all sober minds".

The civil service with its present traditions, is doomed. The bureaucratic oligarchy will, after a time, cease to exist, much to the relief of other Europeans, official and non-official, as also of the people who are pleading for home rule. But it by no means follow that Englishmen who have contributed so largely towards evoking the spirit of nationalism in India, are to be eliminated entirely from the department which, in the future, will carry on the administration of the country. The outcry for a larger number of appointments in the public services does not mean the entire exclusion of Europeans but is directed to the reversal of the policy by which the children of the soil are prevented from attaining to positions they are qualified to fill. India desires to emerge from a state of tutelage, but has no illusion that, as matters stand at present, it can dispense with the wisdom, the experience and the good will of those who have so far directed its destiny. The scientists, the educationists and the experts in the various departments of learning have received, and will ever receive, a warm welcome and why should this be not extended to those whose services are, from one point of view, more valuable and even indispensable? Whatever may happen a few decades hence, at present, in the interests of India, it is essential that there should be a strong leaven of the English element amongst those who

will be charged with the work of administration; with this difference, that in the future the people will have a share in directing the policy that is to be pursued and that there will be a larger proportion of Indians who will give effect to this policy. The civilian of the future, in place of being the sole ruler, will have the responsibility shared by others and will be released from the odium, which is now borne by him entirely, for acts that are unpopular. That the members of the civil service, come out to India actuated by purely benevolent motives is a fiction which will, before long, be replaced by the fact that, like other Englishmen in the various departments, they seek out a career in this country as it offers an opening for their talents which cannot be utilized in their own home, as it is overstocked by those possessing equal or superior talents. The struggle for existence is a powerful motive which will impel English youths to visit the shores of India, provided the doing so is sufficiently remunerative, in spite of the fact that the opportunity for indulging in autocratic rule will be taken away. In a democratic country like England the tendency is not in this direction; it is a luxury which is acquired after a certain term of residence in India and is repugnant to most well regulated minds. The civil service, in its own interest, should then cheerfully accept the new order of things, wherein a great sphere of usefulness is still open to it. On the other hand, some of our rising politicians would do well to moderate their antipathy, towards a class which, all things considered has done a good deal for India and may yet do a good deal to further its material and moral welfare. The future relations between England and India are by no means so disconcerting as some pessimists would have us believe.

Since the above lines were written the Reforms Bill has found a place among the statutes of the realm. A discussion of its merits is out of place here, but there is one outstanding fact which is very relevant. From all sides the advice has been tendered to us, with the best of motives, that if we wish to utilise to the full the new privileges that have been conferred on us we must work in co-operation with the civil service. Lord Selborne, who was President of the Joint Committee, has given expression to views characterized by the highest statesmanship and sympathy towards India. He advised the people to be moderate in their criticism of things and persons unless they wished to alienate the good will of their fellows subjects, and to the civil service he advanced an appeal which is very significant:—"Your work will be different, your position will be different, but so far as this humble admirer of your great work can judge it is not going to be in the future a bit less interesting. It is going to be of a different kind, but I am quite certain that the service you can render to India and the Empire is going to be greater in the future than it has been in the past."

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEW CULT OF AUTOCRACY.

All round we find a high tribute being paid to India's growing sense of nationality. It is further conceded that self-government, which is its logical sequence, cannot now in some form or other be withheld from us. In a previous article a sufficiently strong case has been made out as to India's capacity to undertake this task. This is a valuable asset and on it we are going to stake the future welfare of 315 millions of human beings. Take away this asset and we forthwith become bankrupt and do not deserve that any heed should be paid to our professions and protestations. We will soon be put on our trial; how are we going to acquit ourselves? Are we going to make ourselves the laughing stock of the world? Do we wish to be the instruments of bringing further disasters on our country? It looks very much as if something of the kind will happen unless we are careful about our future movements. We know with what jealous and envious eyes these are being watched. A false step now taken will discredit us, and very rightly, in the eyes of the English public which is ready to confer on us an inestimable boon. It, therefore, behoves us to seriously consider the present situation and act with the utmost circumspection. For we shall soon be called upon to undertake a responsible duty which is not being forced on us, but which we are eager to assume. But a week ago I laboured hard to establish the fact that we are competent to discharge this

duty. It is not pleasant for a writer to have to retract what he has written, but it is better that than to live in a fool's paradise to be ignominiously turned out of it.

The goal we are aiming at is creditable enough, for it is the gradual attainment of self-government as an integral part of the British Empire. This is to supersede the present absolute rule of an alien nation. It embodies a revolution, though not accompained by the clash of arms and streets overflowing with blood. It is a peaceful revolution, the seal to which will be put on the floor of the British Parliament. For a nation to have exercised despotic sway over a country for a century and a half and to quietly surrender its rights predicates not merely a nobility of mind, but the sagacity of being able to perceive that in the progress of events a change had become desirable both in the interests of the dominant power and of the people whom for so long it had held in subjection. England is a democratic country, and despotism in any form is repugnant to its instincts. But a resort to it in India was inevitable by reason of the influences that were at work. There was the prospect of a field, at once wide and profitable, being opened out for the adventurous youths desirous of escaping from the struggle of existence, which is the ordinary lot of an overcrowded population. An opportunity was being afforded for the expansion of British commerce and manufactures which was greedily availed of at the expense and, in some instances, the extinction of Indian industries. That despotism, however benevolent may have been its intentions towards India, served England well cannot be denied. But it will also have to be admitted that an absolute rule was for a time essential in the interests of India. A prey to foreign

invaders and torn by internal distensions, a strong hand was needed to secure peace within and from without. But while on the one hand, despotism reigned rampant, on the other hand, the rulers were busy writing its epitaph. For they deliberately and with full knowledge of the consequences introduced a system of education which was bound to overthrow in time the absolute rule of those to whom was committed the destiny of India. And it is the recognition of the fact that the time has now arrived for substituting something better for the decaying fabric of a system of government adapted only to obsolete conditions that redounds to the credit of the English nation.

Self-government we want, and the boon will soon be granted to us. Whether it will satisfy our demands or our expectations we need not pause to discuss here, for once we are started on the road to it nothing can keep us back and sooner or later we will reach the goal. The tide has set in, and no human hand can roll it back. But what is self-government? To put it shortly and simply, it is the administration of the public affairs of a country by the people. It is distinguished from autocracy where a single person exercises uncontrolled authority, and from an oligarchy where the supreme power is placed in the hands of a few persons and a despotism in which no place can be found for the will of the people. The present Government of India comes under the last named category and a strong desire is expressed that it is should be modified so as to allow the people some voice in the direction of affairs. For securing this, we are entitled to utilize every form of legitimate agitation ranging from mild expostulation to the employment of language that is forcible and emphatic. But a person turns up and says: 'Why,

plead or agitate, there is a trick as old as the hills, known in India by the name of *dharna*, which is less irksome and more effective. All one has need to do is to lie on his back and decline to budge till what he wants is granted or what he wishes to be removed is put out of the way.' Verily, passive resistance has not even the saving grace of originality; it is *dharma* of old in a western polish. The parallel does not end here. The indigenous article was utilized by fakirs who had earned the reputation of living in the odour of sanctity, its modern substitute is being played for what it is worth by a man who bears a saintly character and who by certain achievements, wherein pure unselfishness and a genuine desire to benefit mankind played a conspicuous part, has earned the reputation of a saint. When he tells the people they are lacking in experience and he has abundance of it and to spare he is by no means romancing; when he tells them they talk a good deal, but his privilege it is to fast and to pray, he is fortified with the conviction that it is easier to pray than it is to reason and persuade and convince, and that to persons with a weak digestion a little fasting is equal to a pint of patent medicines, apart from the accretion it unintentionally brings to one's piety; when he tells them that they are helpless when beset with trials and adversities, but that he has a specific which is an infallible remedy for all the ills in creation, he is convinced he is imparting an absolute truth and in the efficacy of which he entertains a profound belief, and when he appeals to the people to surrender their will to his and to follow him implicitly he does it in all simplicity and in the assurance that he is providing their political salvation. And the people vie with each other in the imitation of the master's

simplicity and unbounded faith. Never mind if he commits mistakes which produce incalculable mischief, is he not prompt in acknowledging them in all humility and if suffering has arisen thereby is he not ready to undergo a seventy-two hours' fast and even to wear the crown of marytrdom ?

If this means anything it is the proposed substitution of autocracy for despotism. It invites us to throw ourselves from the frying pan into the fire. And this is to be the net result of our proud boast that the country is now alive to a sense of its political consciousness. Where was the necessity for deputations of our leading politicians to undertake a long and tedious journey to perform the herculean task of enlightening the British public, which I am not sure has any particular desire to be enlightened, about the woes with which India is afflicted and during their spare moments to throw mud at each other ? The mud-throwing process could just as well have been carried on here, and as to the woes of India it is suggested there is just as good a chance of these being mitigated by indulging in a few fads at the instance of an individual who has his own panacea for all the ills of humanity. In fact Mr. Gandhi has stated : 'It is my firm belief that we shall obtain salvation only through suffering and not by reforms dropping on us from England, no matter how unstintedly they might be granted.' We need not question his honesty or impute to him that he is intentionally trading on the credulity of others, but that is precisely the effect of his propaganda. When he tells the women who are touching his feet and looking at him with adoring eyes that they had better leave off spinning yarns of one kind and take to spinning yarns of another kind his gospel

is worthy of acceptance, but when he is marching at the head of a procession with his heart filled with sorrow at some iniquitous act of omission or commission on the part of Government, and the rabble gets out of hand and indulges in fooleries of sorts even to the extent of committing serious breaches of the law, he has trespassed in a domain reserved for the practical politician and in which a saint and visionary is entirely out of place. Here we are breaking our heads to get some grievance redressed or some right adjusted. Reams of manuscript eloquence are hurled at the head of an official offender and wise heads meet in conclave to devise the line of action to be adopted by the representatives of the people who will soon be charged with the administration of the affairs of the nation. And in steps Mr. Gandhi and starts a fresh tune and expects his puppets to dance to that tune. It may be that it is an excellent tune but with it should also be considered the fact that he may thereby be making his devotees ridiculous in the eyes of the world and, indeed, prejudicing in a general way their material or political prospects.

The time has arrived for us seriously to consider where we are drifting to. Do we really want self-government or do we want autocracy? Whether it is of a saint or a sinner it matters not, for the one can do as much mischief as the other. If it is autocracy we want, let us be straightforward about it and stop this outcry for self-determination and political progress. Passive resistance has its uses and its abuses. It may be an ideal remedy in one case and it may deal death and destruction in another case. If the united voice of the people, after due deliberation, deems, under certain circumstances, a resort to it to be desirable as a forlorn hope it may be acted upon,

but as a specific for all diseases, to be used in season and out of season, it savours very much of the nostrum, ordinarily concocted by a quack. Then comes the question as to the right of the quack to thrust his remedies down the throats of others, never mind if he entertains a genuine belief in their efficacy. In spite of his saintly character, of his past services and of his good intentions, the public at large are entitled to tell Mr. Gandhi in plain terms that he ought not to deal with political questions in respect to which he has given indisputable evidence that they are beyond his competence and that of any other man whose chief dogma is the propagation of truth and who is unable to take into account the actualities and realities of this world, which is by no means overflowing with righteousness and with righteous people. The public has every right to protect itself from the mischief that is being committed by any man, saint or sinner. Some months ago, when dealing with the Punjab disturbances, while I in no way minimized my opposition to the Rowlatt Act, I gave certain cogent reasons for arriving at the conclusion that the application of passive resistance in connection with the Rowlatt Act is both in theory and in practice as illogical as it is indefensible, and strikes at the root of those principles on which rests the whole fabric of law and order. The mischief that had been wrought was so great that even Mr. Gandhi stood aghast at the excesses of those who were marching under the banner of satyagraha. He, therefore, decided to suspend its operations for a time, but later on, announced that they would be renewed in the form of civil disobedience after a couple of months, as he expected during this period the Government to make such a disposition of troops all over the

country that a breach of the public peace would then be well nigh impossible. To this also I took exception, for I could not see the logic of solemnly adjuring the people to break all laws and when they did so and some under the impulse of the moment or through sheer perversity took to committing excesses, asking the Government to shoot them down. I, therefore, proposed that instead of troops being called into requisition all those who were inclined to play the fool, never mind at whose instance, should be quietly taken to the water pump to have their heads cooled, a process to be repeated every day till completely cured. But there is no limit to the mischief unpractical persons are capable of commiting. While I was, in all seriousness, combating the theory of Government that a good part of India was in open rebellion and that the disorders in the country were due to a conspiracy of the educated classes who, it was alleged, were the instigators of the violent crimes committed by unruly mobs, I was surprised to find Mr. Gandhi issuing manifestos of all sorts, bewailing his own monumental ignorance of the forces that were at work amongst the people and imputing their excesses to a carefully planned organization and stating he believed for certain that "some educated and well-informed man or men had a hand in them." Sir Michael O'Dwyer is doing no more than repeating this in stronger language.

But the good sense of the people was not slow in asserting itself, and civil disobedience had to given up as the ordinary mind could not grasp what it meant or what end it was likely to serve. The Rowlatt Act is in a state of suspended animation, but it is certainly not passive resistance that has brought this about. We then come to the

17th October which was to be spent by the Mahomedans in prayer and fasting in connection with the Khilafat. That they should organize such a day to evince their disappointment and sorrow for the fate of Turkey does them every credit, and that Hindus should sympathize with them is evidence of the deep sentiment of unity which characterizes the present day relations of the two communities. But why Mr. Gandhi should foist on this his hobby for *hartal* is beyond comprehension. A practical man would have given some thought to the serious consideration that, by enjoining on the Hindus the observance of this day and asking them to close their shops, though compulsion of any kind was deprecated, he was exposing such of them as did not do this to the ill-will of their Mahomedan neighbours. Any how the injunction of Mr. Gandhi was more honoured in its breach than in its observance, and it is entirely due to the good sense of the Moslems that it gave rise to no resentment. We now come to the last and the most serious of Mr. Gandhi's blunderings. He is now proposing that Indians should abstain from taking part in the peace celebration as a protest against the impending danger to the Khalifate.

Mr. Gandhi must know the trend of events of the past five years, as he has so keen a desire to dabble in political matters. Was the war started by Germany a just and holy war, or was it the intention of its rulers to establish a tyranny over the whole world to feed their lust for power and wealth? Did India lend a hand in this desperate conflict merely at the bidding of England, or were its people convinced that they were fighting to overcome a great evil which might indeed have overwhelmed them? When Hindus and Mahomedans and Christians solemnly

put forth their prayers for the success of the Allied arms, were they sincere in their devotions or playing a part as hypocrites? During the progress of the war has India not had to suffer in a variety of ways in spite of the fact that the scene of the struggles was thousands of miles away and was it not likely that their sufferings would have been increased a hundredfold if the issue had taken a different turn? If our days of doubt and despondency are over have we no cause for congratulation and rejoicing? After the sacrifices India has voluntarily made in giving the best of its manhood and the best of its wealth, has it no interest in the discomfiture of the powers of darkness that had been let loose? Has India no concern in the affairs of England that it can adopt a detached attitude, while the whole world except the vanquished is jubiliant and elated at the success of the Allied arms? Have we no desire to improve the relations that exist between the people of this country and a nation which after all is still ruling over India and from which much is expected, especially at this critical period? From every point of view then we have reason to rejoice, not that we are called upon to do so, but that we are giving expression to a natural feeling, while at the same time we furnish evidence of the fact that we are not insensible to the obligations that have been imposed on us by the inclusion of India in the comity of nations. It is therefore to be hoped that people of all communities, rich and poor, will unite in the celebration of an occasion which appeals to all alike.

But it will be asked if the Mahomedans can do this in the face of the uncertainty about the fate of the Khalifate. It would be wrong to doubt the genuineness of the Moslem

feeling or to minimize its intensity. But there seems to be some confusion of ideas which needs to be cleared up. The victory of the Allied arms signifies primarily a defeat of Germany and it is that which is being celebrated. When Turkey was in a way forced to enter the war the fact was very much deplored by the Mahomedans of India, who were by no means free from apprehensions as to its ultimate fate. For all that it was Moslem troops of India and Africa who largely contributed to the overthrow of the enemy and now what they were fighting for is achieved it seems somewhat illogical to refuse to rejoice in the cessation of a war iniquitous in itself, carried on with the utmost savagery and accompanied with the probability that if it had been prolonged the fate of Turkey might have heen worse than it is at present. To refuse to rejoice with England is to throw doubts on the efforts it has made to mitigate the rigour of the terms to be meted out to the Ottoman Government. The Viceroy, there is reason to believe, has urged on the British Government the importance of the issues involved, and it is a well-known fact that Mr. Montagu, the Maharaja of Bikanir and Lord Sinha have in a whole-hearted manner used the opportunity with which they were favoured for pleading the cause of Turkey. But its future is in the hands of the Allies and it is anything but clear if the attitude assumed by the Mahomedans of India is likely to improve matters.

If nevertheless they cannot see their way to join the peace celebrations, it is a matter much to be regreted, but no pressure ought to be brought to bear on them to act otherwise. And for the matter of that no pressure ought to be placed on any community or individual, but so far as the Hindus are concerned it is obvious that those

who abstain will most likely be actuated by one of two reasons; and these are either the injunctions of one who has come to exercise a masterful influence over their minds, or that some of them entertain for the English people in general and the bureaucracy in particular so great a dislike that they have no desire under any circumstances to come into close quarters with them. There is something intelligible in the last named reason, but the subject cannot be properly dealt with here, and as to the other I would protest, and that strongly, against the autocracy of any individual, never mind how great a saint he be, if I was sure there was a disposition to recognize Mr. Gandhi as a dictator. We shall very soon see that this is not the case. But a curious view has been presented to me by an Englishman with considerable experience of India and its peoples and by a level-headed Hindu. Both credit Mr. Gandhi with being a simple minded person, which fact, it is alleged, is being taken advantage of by designing persons to make him their tool. The Englishman was of opinion that he had been got hold of by persons who bore no good will to the Government to administer it a slap by deprecating any participation in the peace celebrations. On the other hand, the Hindu felt inclined to suspect that some Englishman, resenting the present amicable relations between the two communities, had put him up to issue this manifesto fully aware that the Hindus as a body would pay no heed to it and thus an element of discord would be introduced. Surely this is enough to make Mr. Gandhi to ponder and to refrain in the future from interfering in matters which are evidently beyond his grasp. This is not the time for us to be drifting aimlessly devoid of any sense of responsibility. Since the above lines were written a good deal

has transpired which is not altogether reassuring as to the future. Perhaps no people are so succeptible to hero worship as are Indians, which accounts for the dominating influence exercised by certain individuals. But Mrs. Besant has been dethroned and Mr. Gandhi and Paudit Madan Mohan Malaviya found at the Amritsar Congress. that their views did not receive implicit acceptance, an indication that the autocracy of individuals has no permanent basis. But as this was due to the transfer of allegiance to the autocracy of others it is not altogether a very encouraging feature.

CHAPTER VIII.

ROCKS AHEAD.

In what shape the Reform Bill will emerge from Parliament it is difficult to say in the face of the contradictory views that have been expressed, some of them being extremely optimistic and others extremely pessimistic. But of this there can be no doubt that a new departure in the method of administering the affairs of India is inevitable, and that the people will not be as destitute as they are at present of a voice in the Government of the country. To what extent the existing institutions will be liberalized we shall be enlightened in the course of a few weeks. But whatever be the nature of the reforms, there is always the prospect before us of so utilising the constitutional changes that are impending and the opportunity that will be afforded us for working out our political salvation, that we may be incessantly progressing instead of retrogressing, till eventually we arrive at the goal of complete self-government. We have been so busy urging our demands that there has been some disposition to overlook the rocks ahead that may wreck our frail bark or at any rate render its safe navigation not such a facile process as some easy-going people imagine it to be. 'Give us', we say, 'provincial autonomy, give us fiscal autonomy and give us some little power in the Central Government and we shall be happy.' But what about the future? Are we sure it will be all plain sailing for us? Are there no shoals and quicksands that may prove our undoing unless we steer a prudent course so as to avoid them?

It is curious how airily some of us are inclined to treat the bureaucracy which is exercising almost uncontrolled authority over us at present. 'Let our heritage be decreed unto us and we will dispose them of soon enough,' it is said by some. I am not so sure of that. The man in possession has always an advantage and sometimes is able to resist all efforts to oust him. The civil service is undoubtedly in possession at present and has no special desire to be ousted. The Secretary of State and the Viceroy assumed a little too much when they announced the loyal acquiescense of its members to the changes about to be introduced, which implied a practical surrender of their powers. It is even doubtful how far the principle of the Pronouncement of August 1917 is accepted by them, and the fact that it has not been openly repudiated is merely evidence of the loyalty of the servant unwilling to flout the orders or the wishes of his master. This is made quite clear in the evidence of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, who stated before the Joint Committee on Reforms that he 'accepted the Pronouncement of August 20th only as a Government servant but would prefer autocracy pure and simple.' Sir John Hewett was more emphatic in his views, which were indeed so reactionary that he felt ashamed to give utterance to them. When asked point-blank by Mr. Montagu whether he agreed with the Announcement of August 20th, he first inquired whether he was bound to answer the question, but as the Secretary of State was persistent he confessed he would rather not disclose his views on the point. Every answer he gave, we are told, disclosed a root and branch hostility to any real change in the constitution. The evidence given before the Hunter Commission has elicited the fact that the bureaucracy in

the Punjab made a most desperate and determined stand for the preservation of their power, their prestige and their privileges. If in so doing they shocked the conscience of England which has vehemently repudiated their outrageous conduct, it is but one of the fortunes of war. They played for a high stake and in so doing over-reached themselves and brought dishonour to the British name. The cry in England, "what amends can me make" is as genuine as it is pathetic.

It is quite clear that one of the rocks we have to steer against is the opposition or, even if it does not go so far, the lack of co-operation on the part of the Civil Service. Sir Michæl O'Dwyer, who by the way represented the views of five Local Governments, has stated specifically that Europeans would serve under Indian members of the Council, but would not like to serve under Indian ministers, and the reason he advanced was that these being inexperienced would not command the confidence of the services. He could not very well say that Europeans would not serve under Indian members of Council as his successor in the Punjab, Sir Edward Maclagan, had worked most amicably with Sir Sankaran Nair, the Educational Member, and Sir William Vincent, whose personality in the Government of India is so strongly accentuated at present, was brought originally from Bihar by Sir Ali Imam to act as his legislative secretary. Now what is the real reason for the reluctance of the Europeans to serve under an Indian minister? The absence of administrative experience cannot count for much in the face of the fact that Lord Sinha, Sir Ali Imam and Sir Sankaran Nair were admittedly successful in the positions they held, in spite of the lack of any previous official experience. I go

further, two of them have given practical evidence of the fact that they entertained such a high conception of their duties, which is an ordinary adjunct of English public life but is not so pronounced in the Indian Civil Service, that they gave up their high positions rather than work under conditions that were not consistent with self-respect. Lord Sinha and Sir Sankaran Nair challenge comparison with the elite of the Civil Service, such as Sir James Meston and Sir Michæl O'Dwyer, who stuck to their posts in spite of being subjected to a serious rebuff and humiliation. The ex-satrap of the Punjab has repudiated that racial distinction had anything to do with the reluctance to serve under an Indian minister, though there is strong evidence of the existence of this feeling. But taking his repudiation for what it is worth, there remains only one consideration and that is that the animus of some members of the bureaucracy against the educated classes is so great that they would prefer to avoid any kind of contact with them. Unfortunately there is a similar feeling on the part of some of the educated classes against the bureaucracy. These are the extremists on both sides, who allow their feelings to get the better of their judgment and so paint the other side in the darkest of hues. Before leaving India Sir Michæl O'Dwyer had his full say about the educated classes, *alias* the agitators, and he did not spare them in his evidence before the Joint Committee and stigmatised them as implacable opponents of the British administration.

But happily such extremists are rare, and, as has already been indicated, the antagonism to the educated classes is not so pronounced outside the Civil Service. A member

of the service in the Madras Presidency has pointedly drawn attention to the fact that the juniors were by no means disposed to fall in entirely with the views of the seniors. It is quite possible that when the present-day leaders, with their traditions of luxuriating in absolute rule, have passed away their successors may see matters in a different light and be disposed to act on the injunction of one of their own class, Mr. Bernard Houghton, who implores them that they should 'now stand aside and in the interest of that country they have served so long truly make over the dominion to other hands. Not in dishonour, but in honour proudly, as ship-builders who deliver to seamen the completed ship may they now yield up the direction of India. For it is the inherent defects of the system, which no body of men, however devoted, can remove which renders inevitable the change to a new policy. By a frank recognition of these defects they can furnish a supreme instance alike of loyalty to the land of their adoption and of a true and self-denying statesmanship'. That Englishmen are entitled to place to their credit a high character and sound common sense must in all fairness be admitted, and if the bureaucracy in India shows a disposition to engage in an unseemly struggle for what it has come to consider its vested rights, it can only be at the expense of these characteristics—a suicidal policy which will result in bringing about a premature collapse. The part recently played by the executive in the Punjab, never mind what the provocation was, will never be repeated again, for when in later years the history of the period comes to be written, no unprejudiced and impartial writer will fail to put on record the fact that sentiments were expressed and a line of conduct was

pursued which sounded the death-knell of bureaucratic rule. It has brought together the most discordant elements to coalesce in the desire to be rid of this rule at the earliest opportunity. But here again the high character and sound common sense of the British race stand out in broad relief, and Lord Ronaldshay, Sir George Lloyd and Mr. Barron, by the exercise of tact and true statesmanship, redeemed the reputation of the nation which they represent in India. The adaptability to existing circumstances is a phenomenal characteristic of the English people and we would be wise instead of planning to be rid altogether of the bureaucracy to try to work in co-operation with them and the likelihood is we will not be disappointed. And this I say in spite of the disclosures in the Punjab.

Another obstacle which stands in the way of a full and speedy achievement of our aims and aspirations may be entirely of our own creating, and that is the lack of fitness for undertaking the onerous task of self-government. We may indulge in any amount of tall talk, but after all the result will depend on the practical evidence that is forthcoming of our capacity to administer the affairs of the country. To do this with any appreciable amount of success we need to have a lively sense of the community of interests, to cultivate a unity of purpose, to be ready for the exercise of self-sacrifice, tolerance and forbearance, and by patience and perseverance to make up for lack of administrative experience. For the last named drawback the English bureaucracy is entirely responsible, for they have so far deliberately kept the people under leading strings and deprived them of any opportunity to act on their own initiative or to bear the burden of any responsi-

bility. One of the conditions of despotic rule is that everything is done 'for' the people and nothing 'by' the people. Given the opportunity and the will to achieve, we can overcome the lack of experience, though we may have many a slip and many a stumble placed to our credit. English statesmen when placed at the head of a department have usually no experience to start with, but often turn out to be brilliant administrators. We need not despond. But even with the opportunity at our disposal and a fixed goal in view, we may find ourselves stranded by failing to check our mutual antagonisms. To start with, we have an inherent disadvantage to contend against. India, unfortunately for itself, is not a nation. It is made up of an aggregate of communities of diverse races, religions and creeds, different from one another in education and civilization and split up into innumerable castes which by their exclusiveness give evidence that they recognize no community of interest, and indeed on the slightest provocation or pretence are ready to accentuate in every method possible their mutual antagonisms. But it is urged that the growing spirit of nationality will overcome their shortcomings. Even a superficial analysis of this new spirit, the contemplation of which is so comforting to our souls, is calculated to disillusionize us to some extent and to moderate the transports of our enthusiasm. Why and how this spirit has come so strongly into evidence affords an interesting but not entirely reassuring study. That it is intensely patriotic cannot be gainsaid, but the genuineness and extent of the feeling of nationality is subject to certain limitations.

The history of India for the past few centuries furnishes ample evidence of the negation of any idea of

nationality, the most striking of which is to be found in the fact that a handful of foreigners were able to establish a rule which while exploiting the country for what it was worth made up for it by providing certain requirements due entirely to the absence of nationality. It has been said that the village communities of ancient India represent the beginnings of self-government, so that we have a fine basis on which to build our superstructure, and that the traditions, the literature and the precepts of Islam indicate that there are no people in the world more democratic than the Mahomedans. All this is true with reference to the Hindus and the Moslems taken seperately but will not necessarily apply to the present complex conditions of Indian life, when conflicting interests are so pronounced that to reconcile them is not an easy matter. Under such circumstances, the growth of the national spirit was bound to be slow and its operations were for a time confined to somewhat circumscribed limits. It was a little more than three decades ago, a select band of men, the direct product of British rule in India, with which their fortunes were intimately associated, came forward as the pioneers of this new cult of nationalism. But behind them was a huge population either inert and inarticulate or where disposed to give any evidence of life it was only to stifle the growing national consciousness which was awakening India from her slumber of ages. Small as was the number of those who were so awakened, it was diminished considerably by some important defections. Indifference was a factor that had to be reckoned with, and who can forget how in the early days of the Congress, Mr. Hume, who was its founder, hurled his anathemas against those who were disposed to be slack in their support of this movement.

Then there was the active hostility of a community with a population of seventy millions to contend against. They did their level best to pull down the structure which was being erected by the professors of the new gospel of nationality, who exceeded them in numbers and excelled them in education and in their desire to secure the political advancement of India. The Educational Conference was a memorial set up to signify to the world that the Mahomedans had no part or lot with the agitators who were preaching the new-fangled doctrine that certain reforms were urgently needed in the administration of the affairs of the country. In adopting this attitude no pretence was at any time made that it was the outcome of any spirit of nationality or that the interests of the nation were being served. It was a sectional movement, actuated by selfish motives and for the time being it served the purpose of securing certain favours from Government. But about a decade ago, there were indications that the partnership between the English rulers and the Mahomedans was not running very smoothly. The young Muslim party were getting restive. They were not willing to be content with favours; they wanted political rights and above all were apprehensive that the Hindus by means of agitation would secure these to the exclusion of themselves. Thus came into existence the Muslim League, a purely political organization as distinguished from the Educational Conference, which ostentatiously eschewed politics. But the curious feature about this League was that the primary reason for bringing it into existence was the protection of Mahomedan interests against anticipated Hindu ascendancy. It was therefore not a national but a sectional movement. If by their exertions the Hindus secured

some plums the Moslems wanted their share and a pretty big share too. Just about this time there was some expansion of the elective system in connection with the municipalities and district boards, which was followed by a general scramble between the two communities, the Mahomedans obtaining the best part of the loot in the shape of separate representation and a disproportionate share of the seats from the point of view of population. After a few years of existence, the League expanded its propaganda to one of co-operation with the other communities for the attainment of self-government. Before this development took place, a compact was arrived at between the Hindu political leaders and the young Muslim party holding extreme views, which had captured the League and practically excluded the old and conservative members. By this arrangement communal representation was assured to this community in all self-governing institutions and the number of seats in the various Councils was fixed out of all proportion to its population, in respect to which protests are still being made by some Hindus. This in itself is an abiding evidence of the absence of a spirit of nationlity, from the point of view of a complete unity of interests and the exercise of mutual tolerance and forbearance. The excluded members who form a large and influential minority are still wedded to the idea of retaining a separate existence and have started Associations of sorts all over the country to protect their interests. It is obvious that the common cause made by the two communities is to serve a particular political purpose and is but a broken reed to rely upon.

I am perhaps laying myself open to the charge of inconsistency, for in some of the previous articles I have